the security of tourists. Some other State Governments are considering introduction of such legislation.

Effect of Terrorist Attacks on Tourism

1641. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the tourism worldwide has been greatly affected by the attacks on the World Trade Centre, USA;

(b) if so, to what extent India being close to Afghanistan has been affected;

(c) whether it is also a fact that tourist visit to India has reduced from September, 2001 onwards;

(d) if so, to what extent;

(e) whether to encourage the tourists Government have decided to scrap entry fee hike at heritage sites; and

(f) if so, the other steps being taken to improve the tourist traffic of India?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) There has been a decline of about 20 per cent in the foreign tourist arrivals during September and October, 2001 as compared to the same period of the year 2000.

(e) The Government has reduced the entry fee for the foreign tourists in respect of ticketed World Heritage Sites.

(f) Various steps taken by the Government to improve the tourist traffic of India include development and improvement of tourist facilities, publicity and marketing efforts in the foreign countries through overseas offices, reorientation in marketing efforts by focussing on markets in South East Asia etc. Efforts have also been made to send appropriate signals to countries all over the world that India is a safe destination.

Development of Lakshadweep as Tourist Destination

1642. SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Territory of Lakshadweep known as the Coral Paradise has 36 islands, out of which 10 are inhabitated;

(b) whether the Home Minister in his visit to the UT has emphasized that a few islands be developed and opened to international and domestic tourists;

(c) if so, the reaction of the Ministry of Tourism and Culture thereto; and

(d) the details of the steps taken for encouraging tourism in the UT?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) Yes, Sir. Lakshadweep is having 36 islands out of which 10 islands are inhabitated.

(b) Yes, Sir. While inhabitated islands Bangaram, Agatti and Kadmat are opened for international tourists, Agatti, Kavaratti and Minicoy are opened only for domestic tourists. The UT Administration of Lakshadweep has proposed to open two more uninhabitated islands named Thinnakara and Cheriyam for international tourism and opening of remaining islands where only domestic tourists are allowed, for international tourists.

(c) In order to promote Lakshadweep as a major tourist destination, Central Department of Tourism has offered financial assistance to prepare a Comprehensive Master Plan for development of tourism in the Island. The UT Administration of Lakshadweep is also considering to private investment for opening new Island for setting up infrastructure for tourism as the islands have tremendous potential to emerge as world class water sports and leisure tourism destination.

(d) Development and promotion of tourism to attract foreign as well as domestic tourists is a continuous process. Central Department of Tourism through its 18 overseas and 21 domestic offices is promoting places of tourist interest in Lakshadweep by advertising in print & electronic media, participation in travel fairs, inviting media & Travel Agents and extensive use of IT in tourism promotion.

Funds for the Promotion of Tourism in Assam

1643. SHRI PRAKANTA WARISA: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of fund earmarked for the promotion of tourism sector during the Ninth Five Year Plan in the State of Assam; and